

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A process, comprising
providing an ink jet printer capable of ejecting a series of drops for deposition on a substrate in a predetermined pattern,
providing a consistency-maintaining food product having gravity flowability of about 50% or more in 24 hours, and
applying to the food product from the ink jet printer a series of media drops in a predetermined pattern, the drops having a drop volume of about 200 pL or less.
2. The process of claim 1 comprising
after applying the media, processing the food product to reduce the gravity flowability.
3. The process of claim 2 wherein further processing includes cooling the food product.
4. The process of claim 3 wherein further processing includes cooling the food product to about 32°F or less.
5. The process of claim 1 comprising
after applying the media, enclosing the food product in a container.
6. The process of claim 1 wherein the food product has a viscosity of about 50,000 cps or less.
7. The process of claim 1 wherein the food product has a viscosity of about 50 to 110 cps and the drop volume is about 120 pL or less.
8. The process of claim 1 wherein the ink jet printer is a drop on demand ink jet printer.

9. The process of claim 8 wherein the ink jet printer is a piezoelectric ink jet printer.
10. The process of claim 1 comprising heating the ejection media to a temperature of about 40 to 140°C.
11. The process of claim 1 comprising printing at a resolution of 50 dpi or more.
12. The process of claim 1 wherein the ejection media has a viscosity greater than the viscosity of the food product at the temperature of the food product during application of the media.
13. The process of claim 1 wherein the ejection media has a viscosity of about 8-20 cps under ejection conditions.
14. The process of claim 1 wherein the ejection media has a viscosity of about 70-100 cps at room temperature.
15. The process of claim 1 wherein the ejection media has a water soluble carrier.
16. The process of claim 1 wherein the ejection media is predominantly an alcohol or acid, or water or combination thereof.
17. The process of claim 1 wherein the ejection media is predominantly a fat or a wax and is a solid at room temperature.
18. The process of claim 1 wherein the ejection media is substantially insoluble in the food product.
19. The process of claim 1 wherein the ejection media includes a visible dye.

20. The process of claim 1 wherein the ejection media includes a flavor additive.
21. The process of claim 1 wherein the food product is a dairy product.
22. The process of claim 21 wherein the food product is ice cream or yogurt.
23. The process of claim 1 wherein the food product is a coffee drink including a dairy product.
24. The process of claim 1 wherein the food product is at a temperature of about room temperature or greater while applying the media.
25. The process of claim 1 comprising:
serving said food product to a consumer within about 45 minutes of applying said media.
26. The process of claim 1 wherein the media on the food product has an image bleed of about 10% or less after 10 minutes.
27. A process, comprising:
providing an ink jet printer capable of ejecting a series of drops for deposition on a substrate in a predetermined pattern,
providing a food product having a gravity-flowability of about 50% or more in 24 hours,
applying to the food product a series of media drops in a predetermined pattern, the drops having a volume of about 200 pL or less, the media on the food product having an image bleed of about 10% or less in 30 minutes, and
after applying the media, processing the food product to decrease the gravity flowability.

28. The process of claim 27 comprising
after applying the media, enclosing the food product in a container.
29. The process of claim 28 comprising enclosing the food product in a container
prior to decreasing the gravity flowability.
30. The process of claim 27 comprising decreasing the gravity flowability about
10 minutes or more after applying said media.
31. A food product, comprising
a consistency-maintaining edible substance having a gravity-flowability of
about 50% or more in 24 hours, the substance including an image visible from its surface, the
image defined by a predetermined series of drops having a resolution of about 50 dpi or
greater and an image bleed of about 10% or less in about 10 minutes.
32. The food product of claim 31 wherein the gravity flowability is free-flowing.
33. The food product of claim 31 wherein the image bleed is about 2% or less.
34. The food product of claim 31 wherein the image bleed is about 2% or less in
about 30 minutes.
35. The food product of claim 31 wherein the food product includes a dairy
product.
35. The food product of claim 34 wherein the food product is a coffee drink.